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पुस्तकालय (विज्ञान विभाग)

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पुस्तक संख्या M77T
आगत पंजिका संख्या
पुस्तक पर किसी प्रकार का निशान लगाना वर्जित है। कृपया १५ दिन से अधिक समय तक पुस्तक अपने पास न रखें। 70198

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आख्या Tantra Magic
पुस्तकालय
गुरुकुल कांगड़ी विश्वविद्यालय

गुरुकुल कांगड़ी विश्वविद्यालय
कृपया पुस्तक के ऊपर कोई निशान आदि न लगायें।

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गुरुकुल कांगड़ी विश्वविद्यालय

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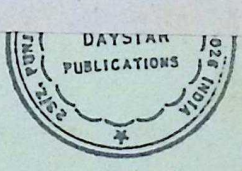
पुस्तक-वितरण की तिथि नीचे अंकित है। इस तिथि सहित १५वें दिन तक यह पुस्तक पुस्तकालय में वापिस आ जानी चाहिए। अन्यथा ५ पैसे प्रतिदिन के हिसाब से विलम्ब-दण्ड लगेगा।



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AJIT MOOKERJEE

Afterword by
MULK RAJ ANAND

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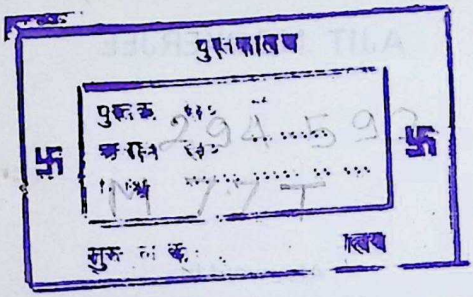

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TANTRIC ART

"Out of me all things originate and into me all are withdrawn."

Tantra has often been misunderstood because of general ignorance regarding its real meaning. Modern research shows the close affinity of Tantras with the Vedas; Tantra itself speaks of its Vedic origin. In its subsequent development, it shows the influence of the Upanishads, Yoga and the Puranas, Jain and Buddhist thought.

Tantra is derived from the Sanskrit root, **tan** meaning to expand. Tantra thus indicates expansion of knowledge or all comprehensible knowledge towards self-realization. Tantra is not a religion. It is not even simply a mystic view of life. It is both an experience of life and a systematic method whereby man can bring out his inherent spiritual power.

Tantric rituals are the basis of a variety of philosophies. There are, for instance, Hindu, Buddhist, Jain and even Muslim forms of Tantra. During the Muslim rule in India, the philosophical movement of Sufism came under the influence of Tantric doctrines and teachings. Many Muslim saints showed a harmonious blending in their works of Tantra-yoga with medieval Sufi mysticism.

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Tantra encompasses not only cosmology and astronomy, but also astrology, palmistry, chemistry, alchemy as well as various yogic disciplines. Quite early, Tantra developed an atomic theory of the universe which had references within it to the space-time relationship and observation of the stars. And all this expressed in terms of various mathematical concepts !

According to Tantra, the cosmos evolves from the primordial sound substratum as a force of monosyllabic mantra, the **om**. All the objects which we see and feel in this universe are sounds of particular concentration. Sound is the reflex of form and form is the resolution of sound.

A further stage in the manifestation of this energy results in the emergence of atoms. The universe is believed to consist of an aggregation of atoms, which is conceived of being in a state of constant integration, disintegration and reintegration.

All manifestation according to Tantra is based on a fundamental dualism: the male principle, Purusha, and the female principle, Prakriti. The Samkhya system teaches that there are innumerable small parts of Prakriti which, keeping a small part of Purusha in the centre, move constantly around it. The duality that persists in tantric yantras manifests itself in the magificent doctrine of the Tantras as Purusha and Prakriti or Siva-Sakti, as balance of form and energy.

Tantra prescribes the discipline of sublimation by the physical union of man and woman into the creative union of Purusha and Prakriti. Owing to the complete intensity of embrace the two all-pervading ones, Purusha and Prakriti become as it were a single principle in supreme bliss which is the highest non-duality—a state of liberation.

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In order to realise supreme bliss, Tantra has discovered the location of the centres of energy —**chakras**—in the subtle body. Every individual, according to Tantra, is a manifestation of that energy, and the objects around us are the outcome of the same consciousness ever revealing itself in various modes. Kundalini Sakti, coiled and dormant cosmic power is at the same time the supreme force in the human body. The awakened Kundalini lifts itself upwards, breaking open different energy centres, **chakras.** Thus in her ascent, Kundalini absorbs within herself all the kinetic energy with which the different **chakras** remain charged and finally become united with the Pure Consciousness which is Purusha.

In other words, these **chakras** are the centres in which psychic forces and bodily functions merge into each other. Within the **chakras,** cosmic and psychic energies crystallize into bodily qualities, which are finally dissolved or transformed again into psychic forces.

At the universal dissolution, all are withdrawn and return to the unmanifested one, conceived as formless, undifferentiated, without beginning and without end. The transcendental influence of Prakriti again initiates the process of creation, thus awakening the cosmic force. Then the world is recreated anew and so the cycles continue, ceaselessly and without end.

Nothing dies in the world; what is apparently dead returns to its element, and then again is reconstituted into form. There is one unbroken, infinite process of life and change.

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The feature that distinguishes the Tantra school of mysticism from others is that it does not believe in the human being withdrawing himself or herself from the life here and now. On the contrary, it envisages a total involvement in the life processes around us, whether spiritual, material or even sexual. As Tantra says : One must rise by that by which one may fall.

To the three eternal questions "Who am I ?" "Whence have I come ?" "Where am I going ?" Tantra answers : "I am all this. Out of me all things originate and into me all are withdrawn." The whole body with all its biological and psychological processes becomes an instrument in and through which the cosmic power reveals itself. Every individual, in the Tantric conception of things, is a manifestation of that power, for the individual being and the universal being are one; all that exists in the universe must also exist in the individual body.

Tantra developed a system of thought and practice to help us see the universe as if it were within ourselves and see ourselves as if we were within the universe. Man can no longer be the measure of all things. He is integrally bound with the life of all created things and in everything he seeks the underlying essence, the life-pervading truth of the universe.

In this spiritual process, a new sign language symbolizing the man-universe relation was discovered and used. Thus the method of yoga assumed a great importance in art; Tantric art itself can be considered as one of the essential forms of yoga.

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To penetrate the enigmatic silence, the mystery of the universe, the Shilpi-yogin (the artist) has employed the yogic process. Tantric symbols and patterns, the storehouse of which is yet little known, light up form and colour because what the Shilpi-yogin arrives at is related to his inner spiritual growth.

Many of the Tantric rituals and its **sadhanas** (contemplative disciplines) have over the years been misunderstood and distorted. In Tantric **sandhyabhasha** —twilight language— there are technical terms whose meanings cannot be understood with the aid of Sanskrit alone. These must actually be heard from the mouth of the guru, the spiritual preceptor. Some of its secret **sadhanas** were traditionally the possession of a few initiates who formed a closed circle and who guarded it with great care, permitting none save qualified aspirants to have access to it. As a result, the pseudo-orientalists recoiled with puritanical shudder from the "mysterious cult" and ridiculed it. This was later echoed by their Indian counterparts in the nineteenth century.

At the beginning of this century, Sir John Woodroffe, a judge of the Calcutta High Court, devoted his time to Tantra studies. With the help of his Bengali guru, Pandit Shiva Chandra Bhattacharya, he translated the guru's "Tantra Tattva" under the title of "The Principles of Tantra". Woodroffe also published under his pen name of Arthur Avalon various works on Tantra. His last book under this name was called "Serpent Power". Later in 1922, under his own name he published, among other works, his famous "Shakti and Shakta".

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Woodroffe and subsequent scholars, Indian and foreign—Snellgrove, Tucci, Dasgupta, Chakravarti and Gopinath Kaviraj—have in their published works expounded the greatness of the Tantra system of beliefs. By their dispassionate statements of the real facts, they tried to clear away the cloud of misconceptions which has obscured our view of its profoundly spiritual teachings. But these works are like a drop in the ocean compared to extant oral and written literature in various Indian languages.

When, 25 years ago, I left my home with a blanket over my shoulders thirsting for adventure, little did I know that my journey would become a pilgrimage. This pilgrimage took me to the remotest corners of India and during these extensive tours I came across unique manuscripts and specimens of Tantra art most of which had remained either hidden or neglected.

Tantra philosophy and physics intrigued me as much as the astonishingly striking similarities between some Tantric works and objects of art, various styles and symbols that are current in contemporary art.

The modern artist today employs abstract forms of representation to express the complexities of life and nature around us, an approach which in Tantra art dates back several centuries. Intellectuals, particularly in the West, are fascinated by the attempt made by Tantric Yogi-painters to lay bare through the art medium the mysteries of the universe and the laws that govern them. The Tantric art forms have, of course, deeper significance.

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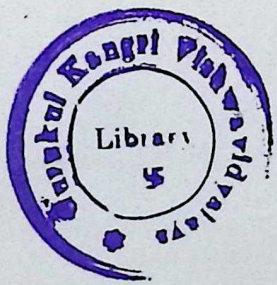
The frustration of the Western youth which today yearns for the mysteries of the universe has already opened a mental door by which Tantrism enters their life. Today's sensitive youth in search of a direction, a purpose behind the pattern of existence, may in due course come to incorporate or even assimilate into their imperfectly developed vision some forms of Tantrism or some elements of the Tantric tradition.

The importance of scientific studies in Tantra art, its philosophy and physics, particularly in this space age, is significant. In many countries in the West pioneering studies are being carried on to explore new areas of human thought on the basis of serious research on psychic and cosmo-biological phenomena.

Modern discoveries in higher physics have shed new light on what we used to explain away as mysteries. In this aspect Tantra concepts deserve scientific analysis.

Unfortunately, knowledge about this has so far been kept a jealously guarded secret in India, depriving mankind of its many benefits. Before it is too late, every effort should be made to reveal the treasures of this wisdom for the service of mankind.

Ajit Mookerjee



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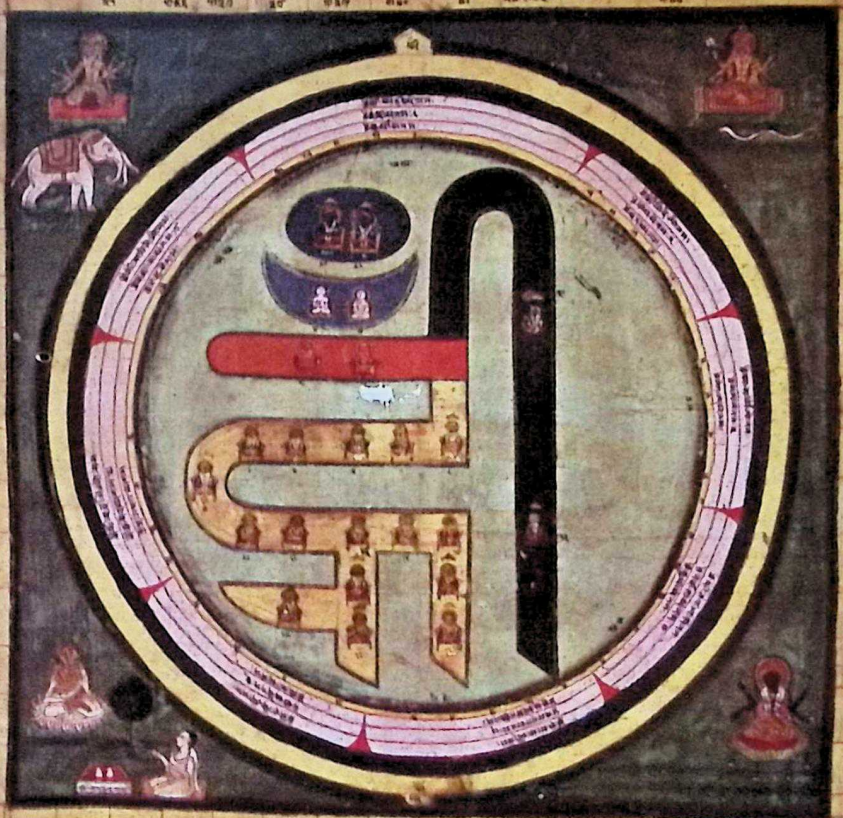

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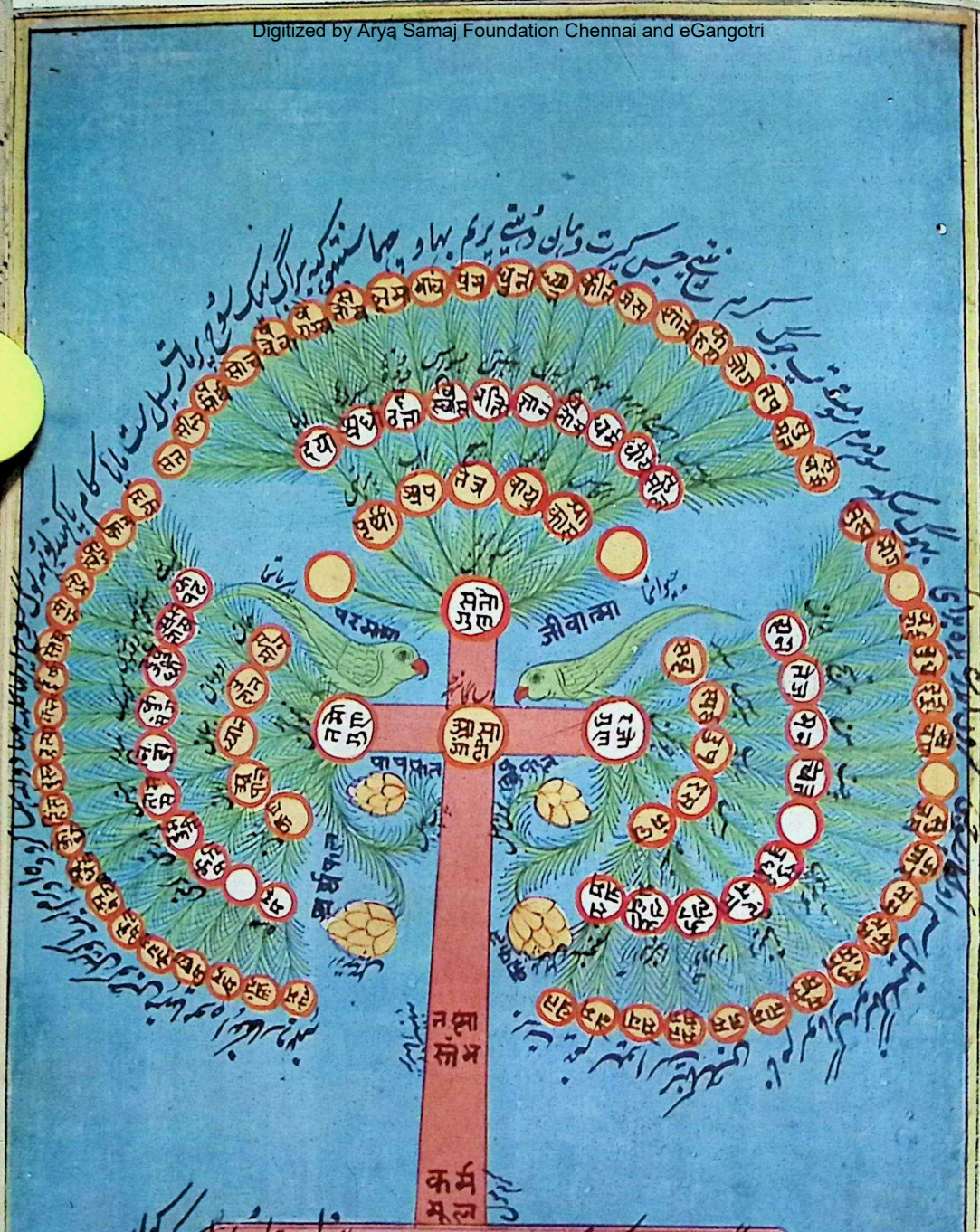

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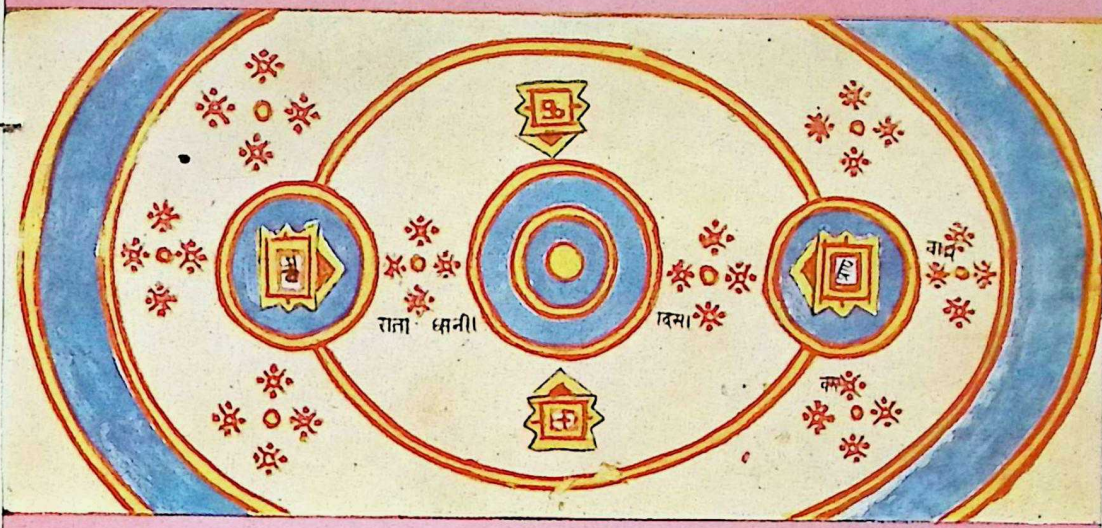

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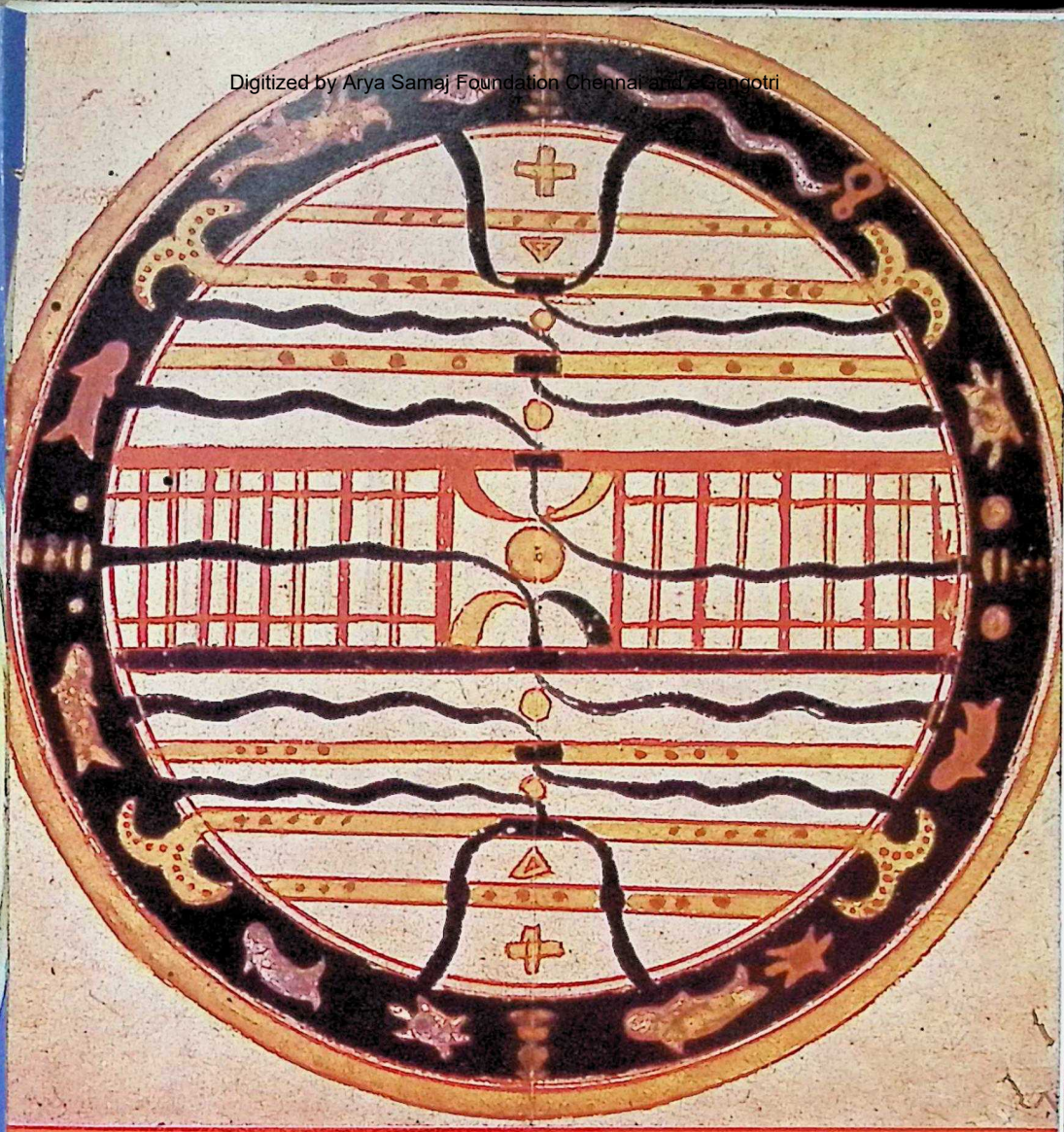

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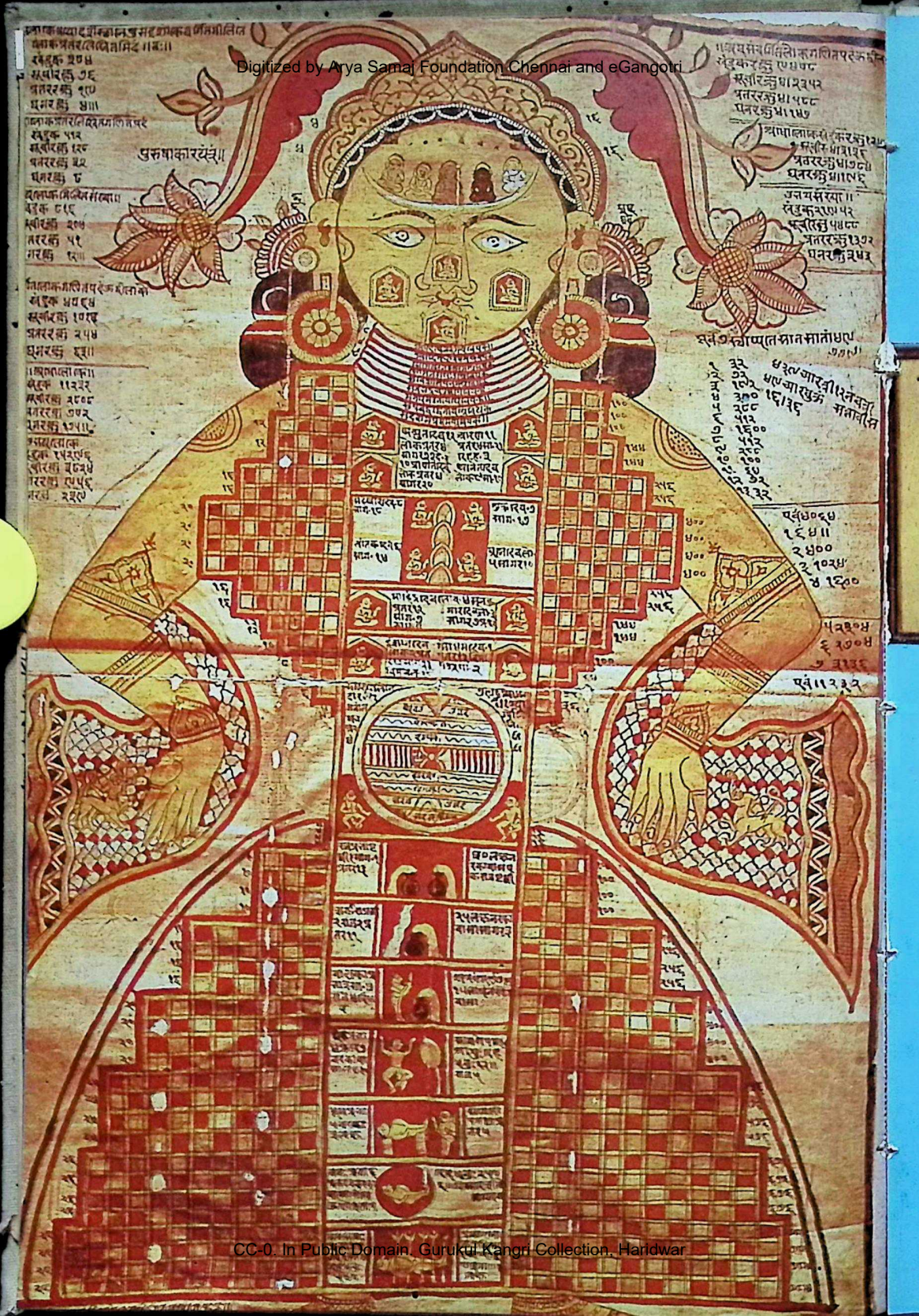

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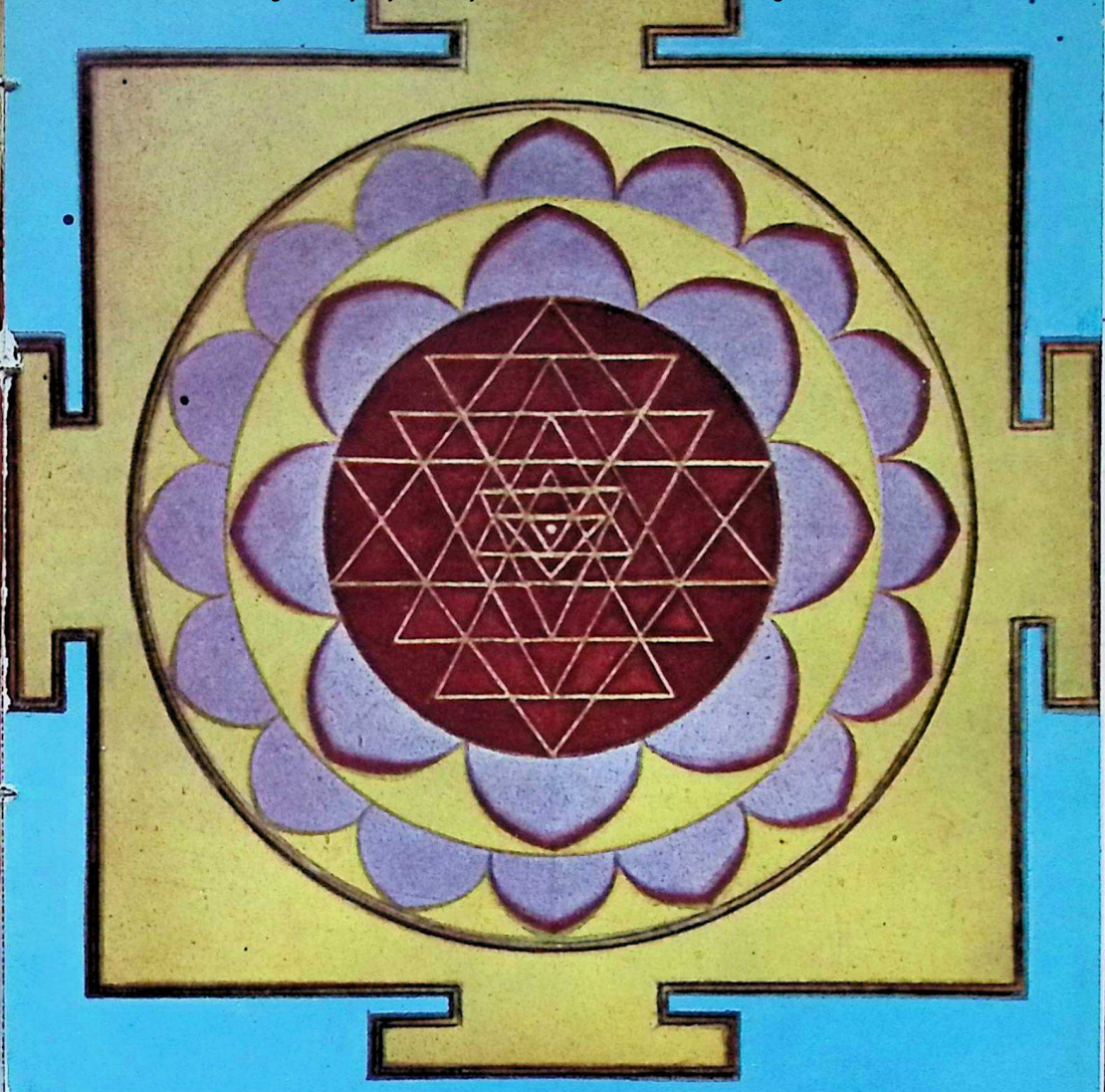

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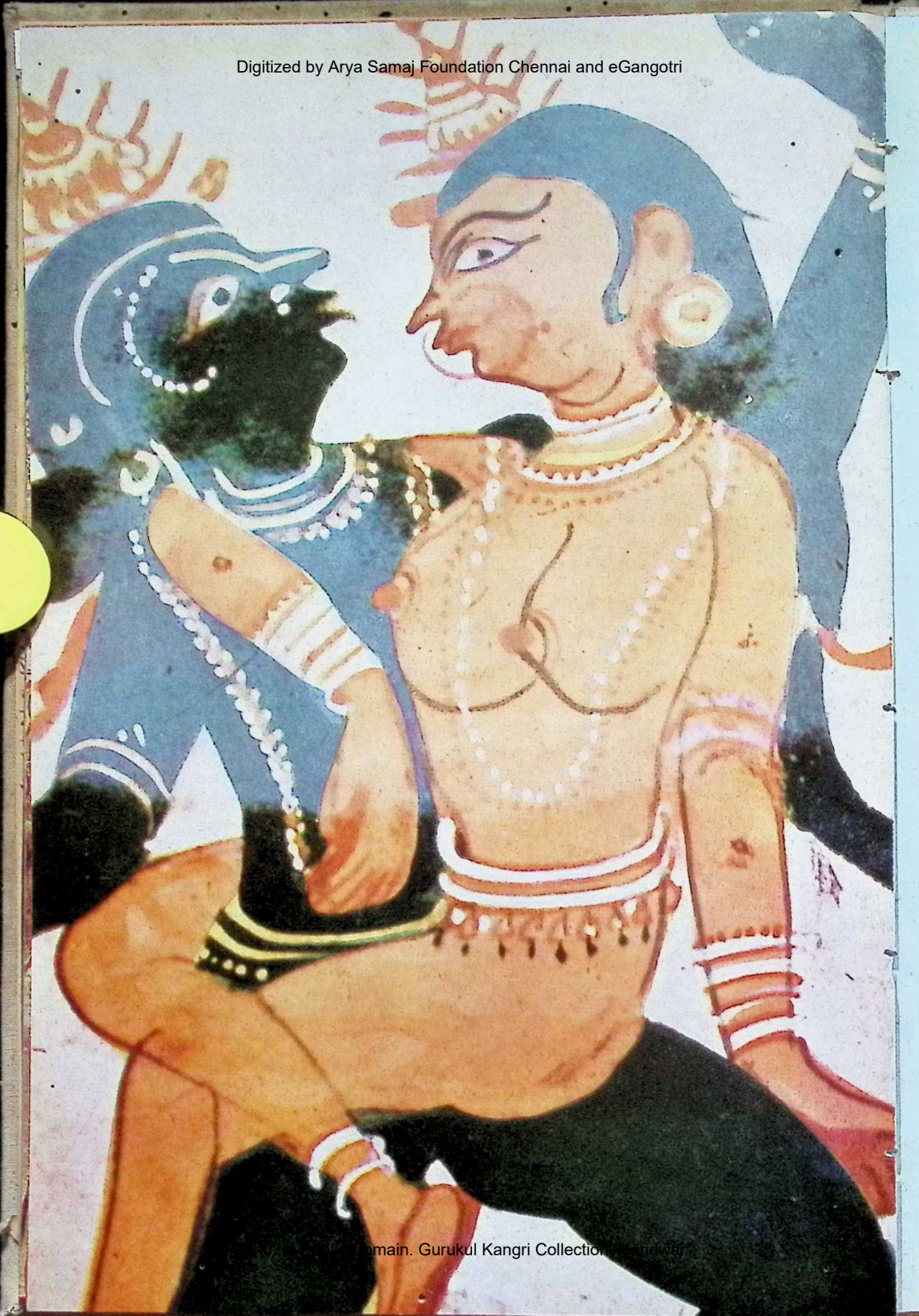

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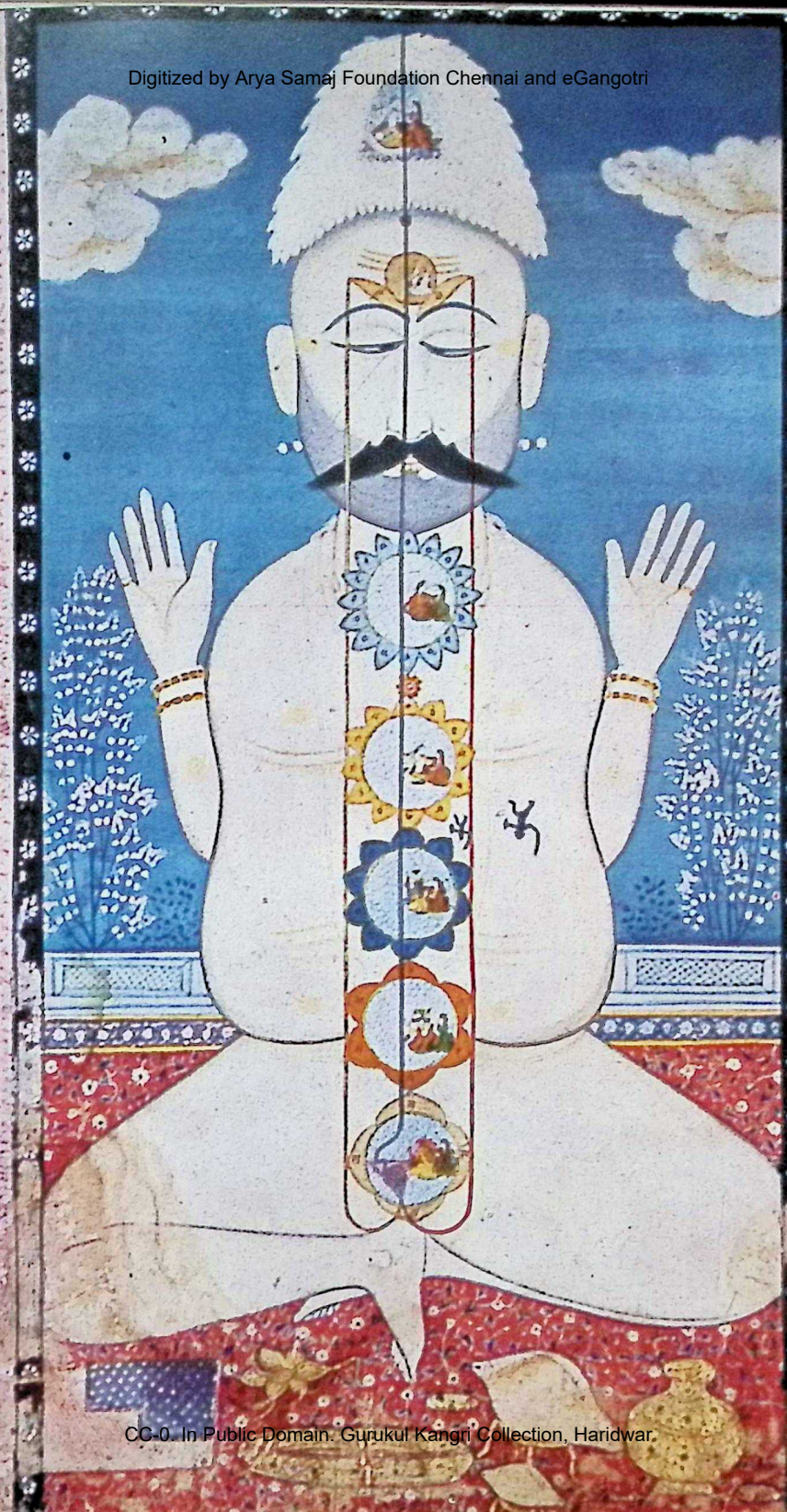

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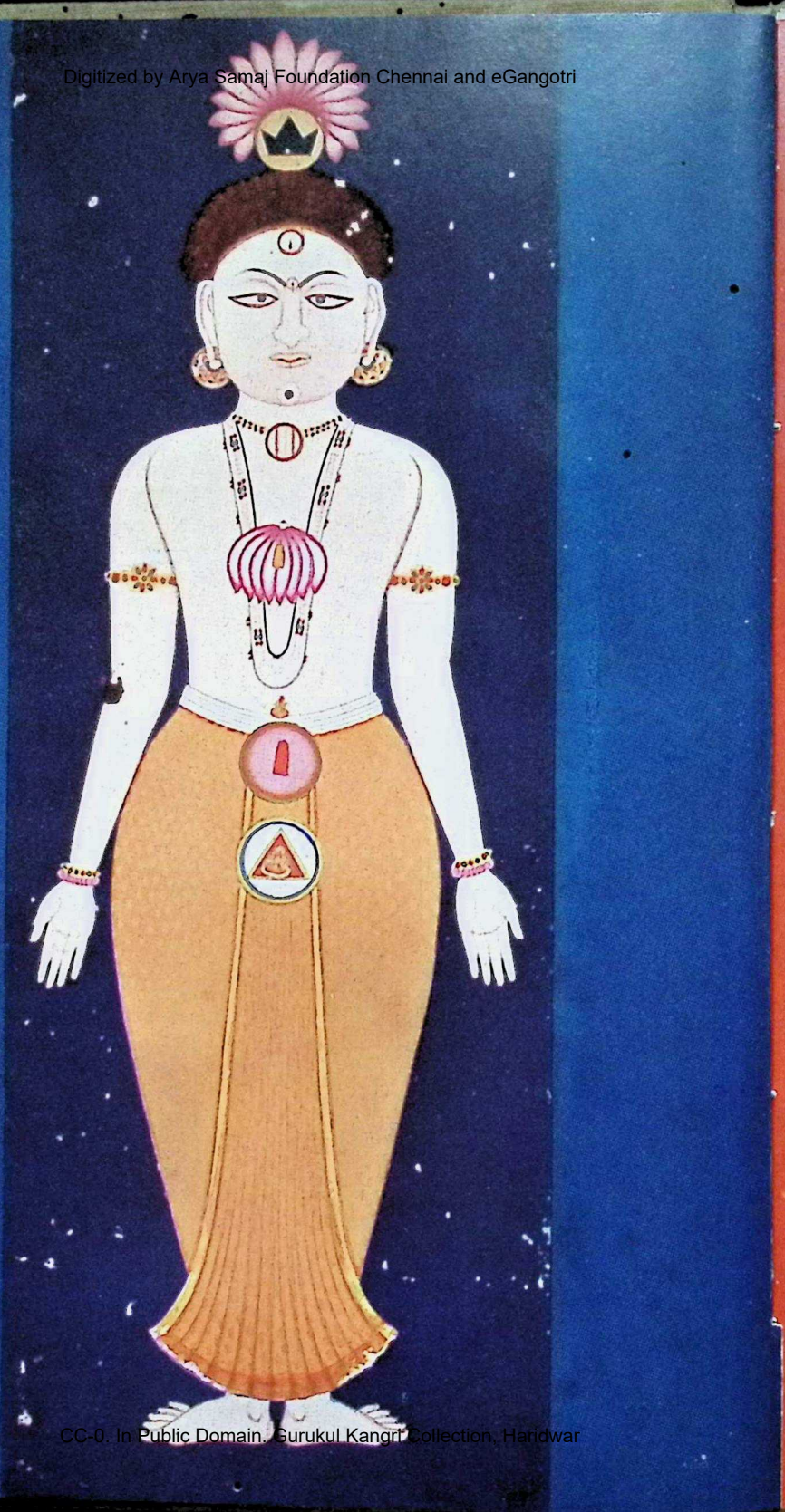

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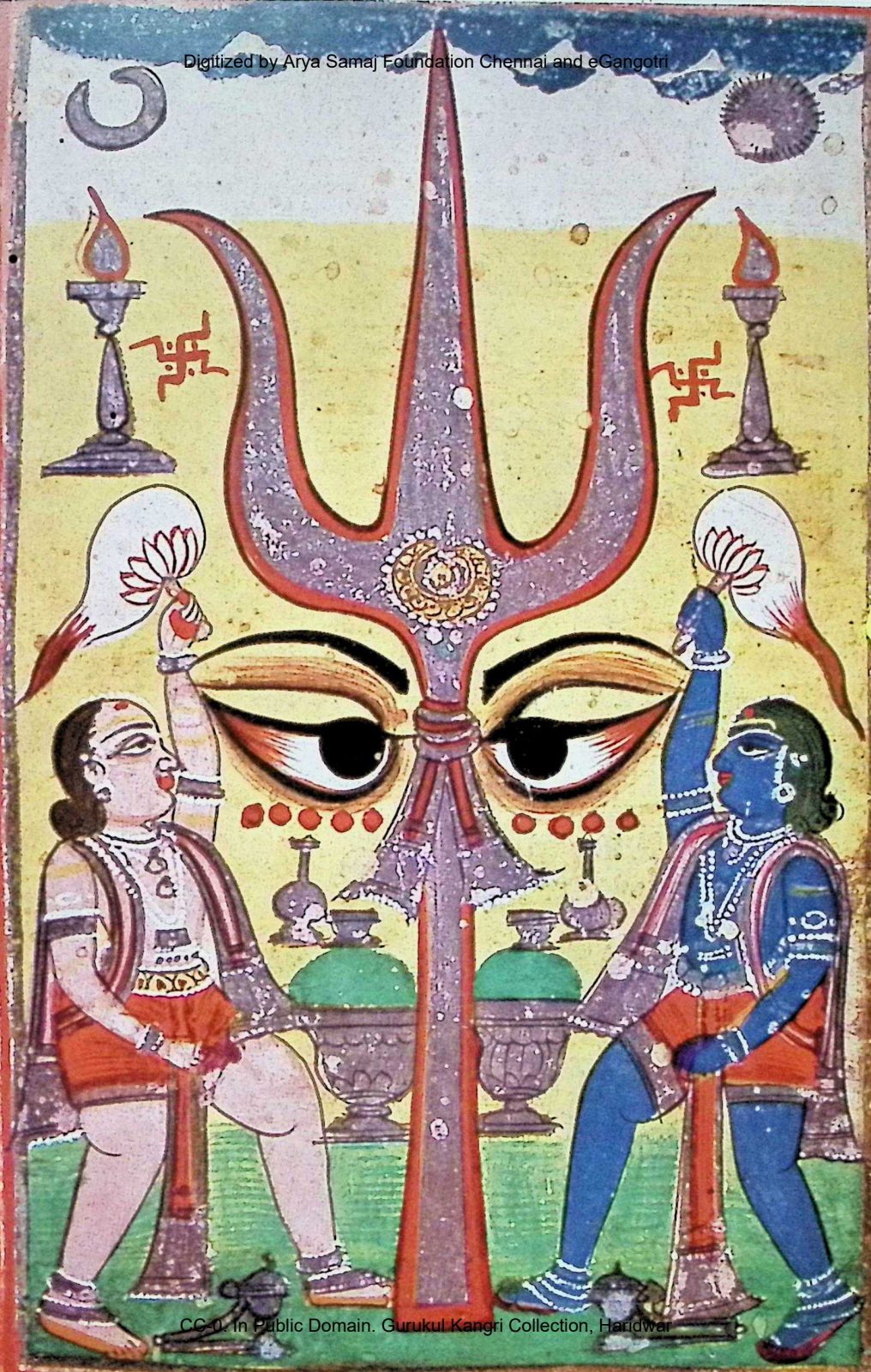

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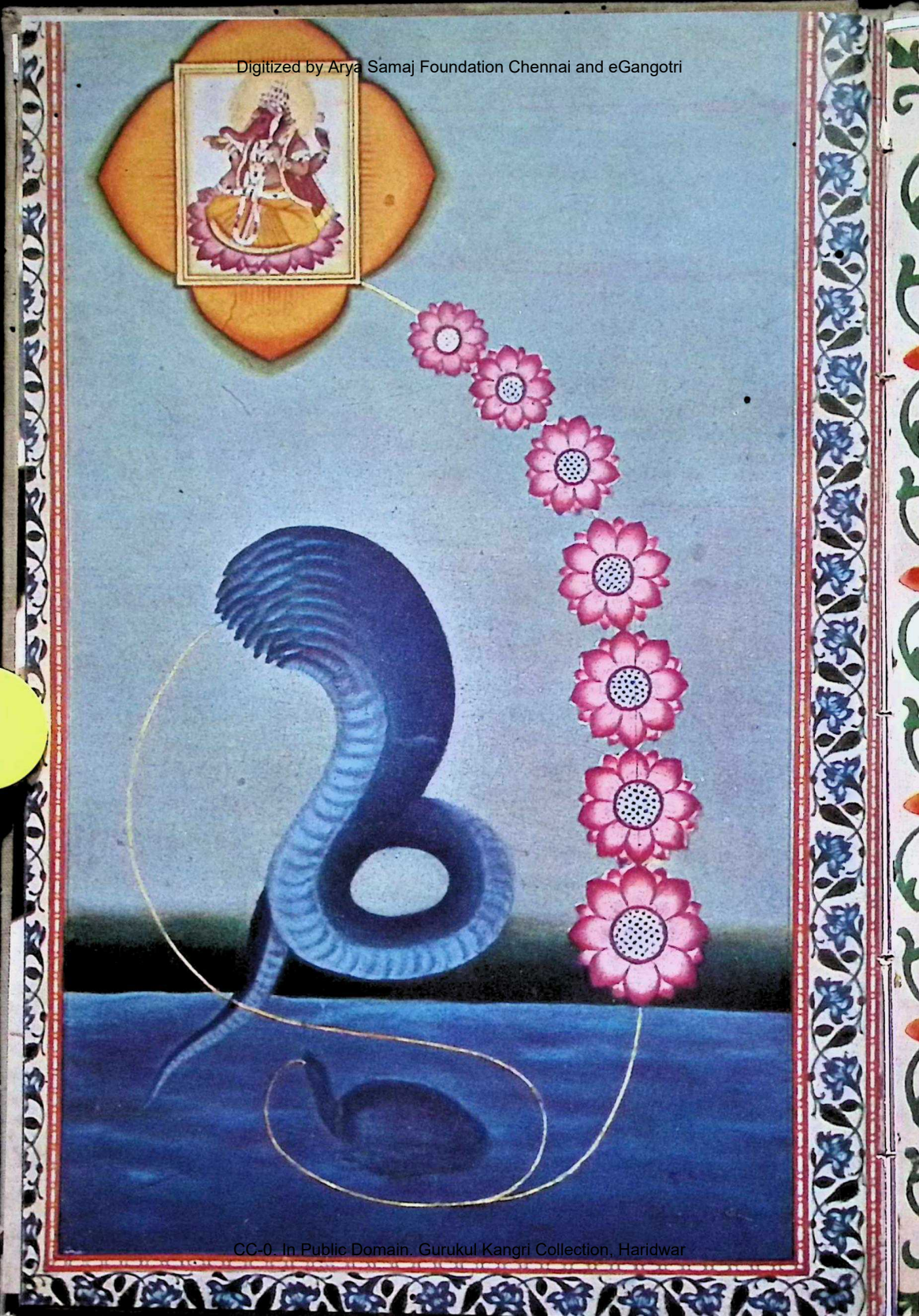

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॥अथश्रीधनभावोपरिग्रहाणांदृश्यः॥

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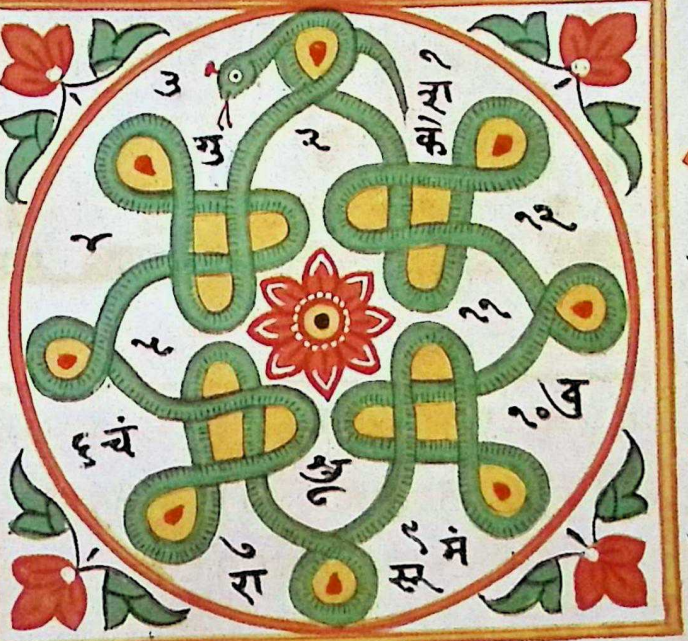

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॥ अथ चंद्रकालानलचक्रम् ॥ कर्कटकेन प्रविधाय वृत्तं तस्मिंश्च पूर्वापरसाम्यसौम्ये वृत्ताद्बहिः संचलिते विधेये रेखे त्रिशूलाश्च तदग्रकेषु कोणश्च रेखाद्वितयेन साध्या पूर्वत्रिशूले किल मध्यसंस्थं चांद्रं लिखेद्भं तदनुक्रमेण सव्येन धिष्ण्यानि वहिः क्रमेण ॥ २ ॥ कालानलं चक्रमिदं हि चांद्रं रणप्रयाणादिषु जन्म भं चेत् त्रिशूलसंस्थं निधनाय भूतं मंतर्वहिस्थं च शुभप्रदं हि ॥ ३ ॥

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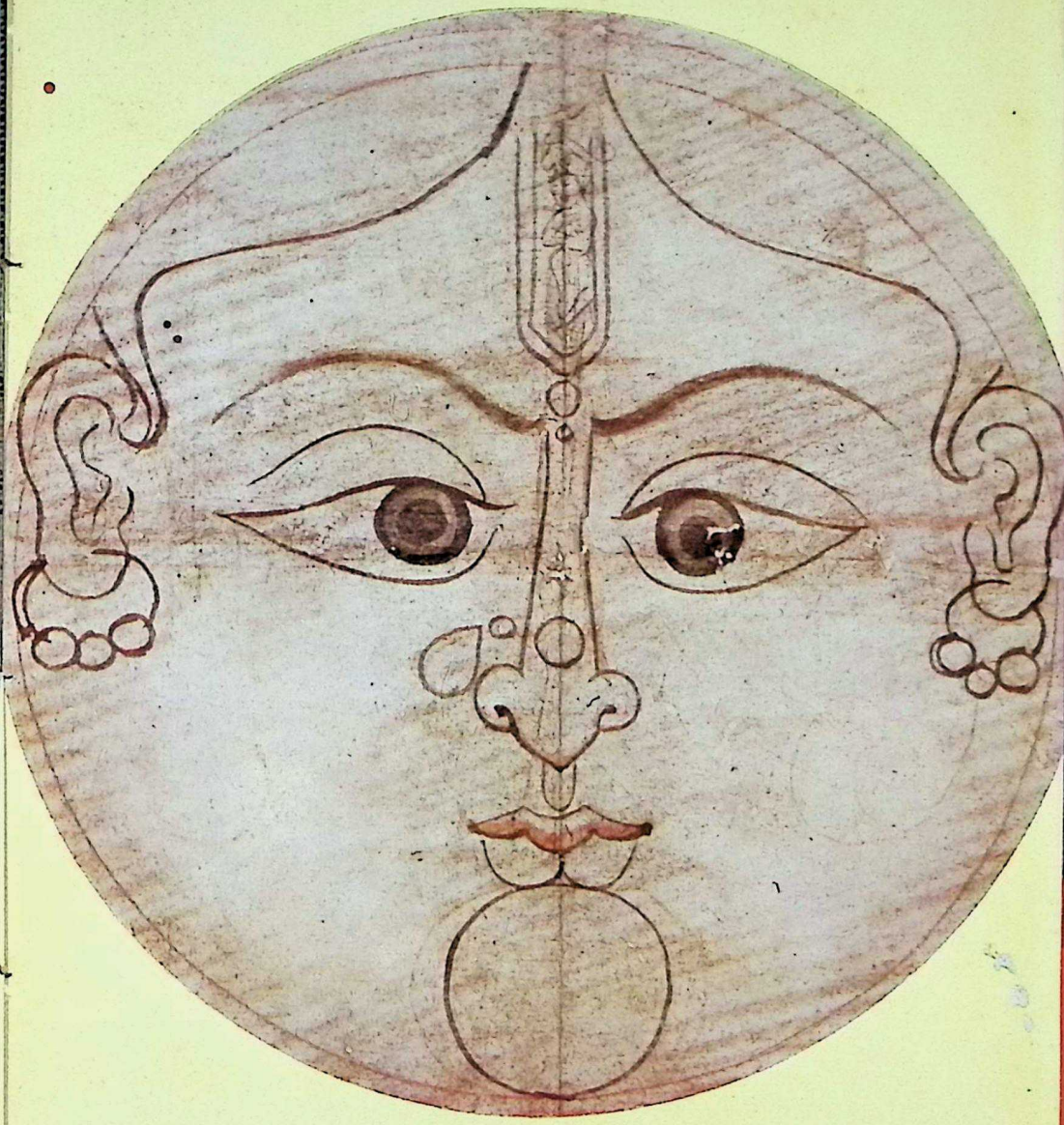

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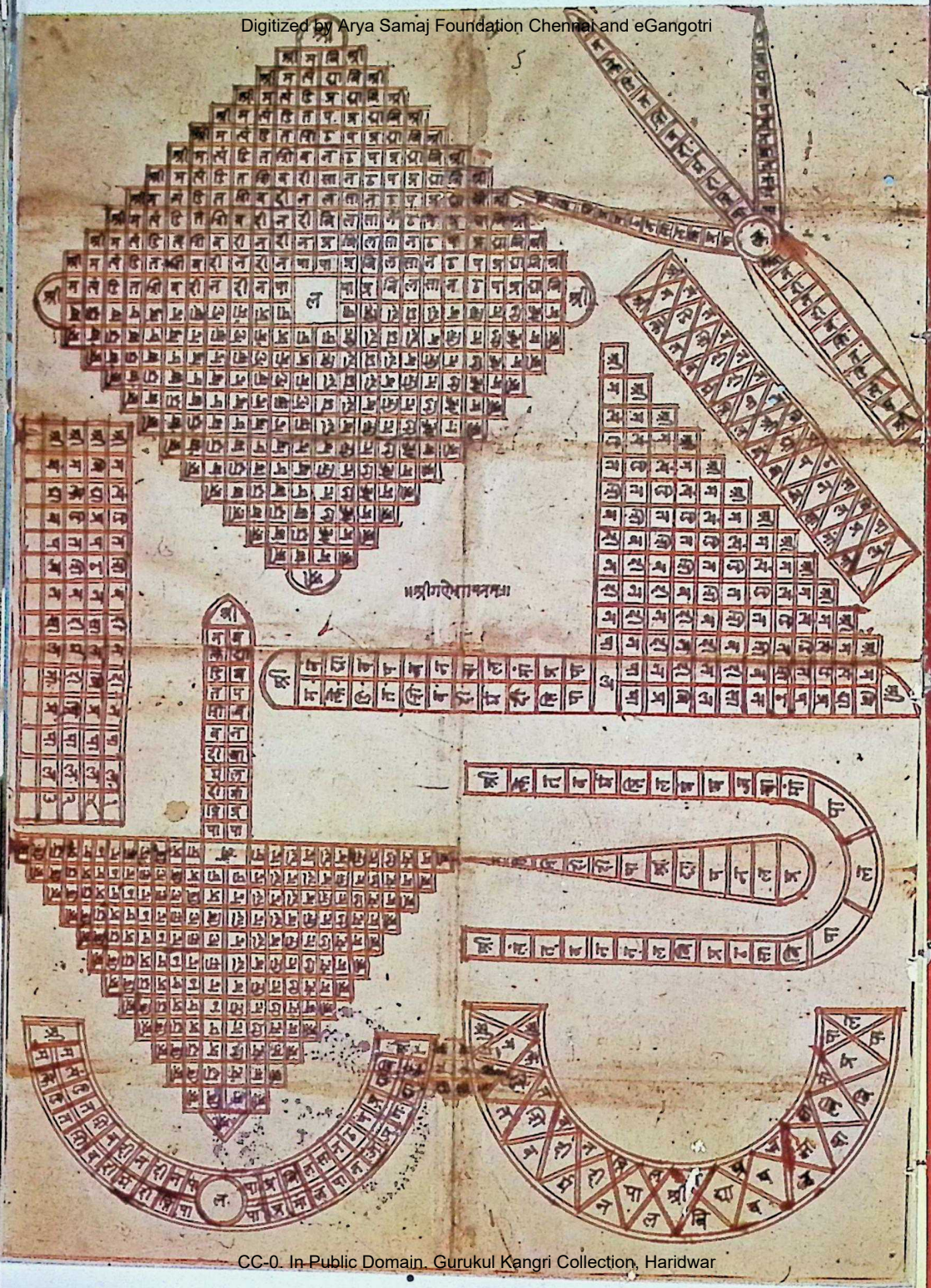

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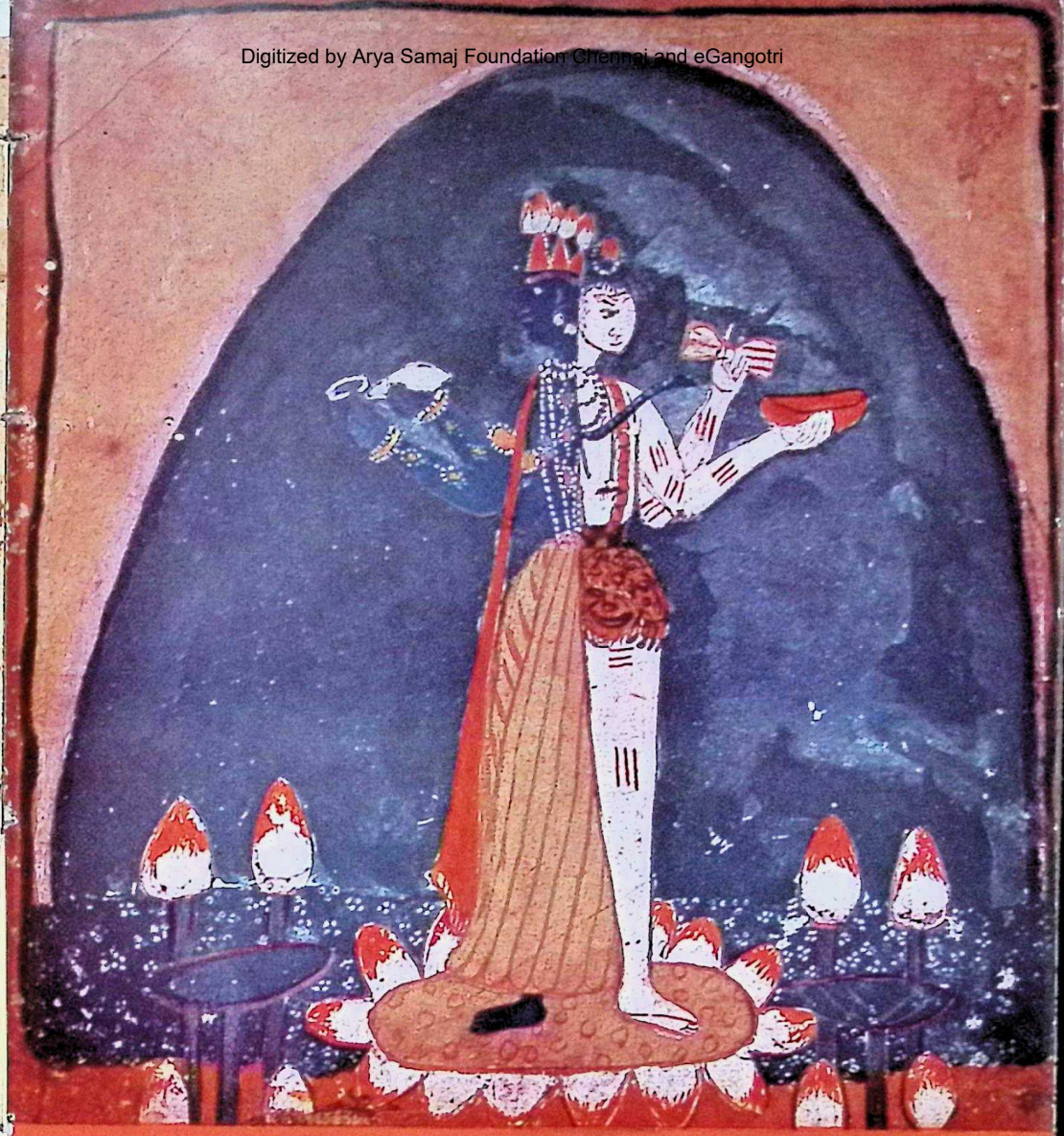

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अनामिका
कनिष्ठा
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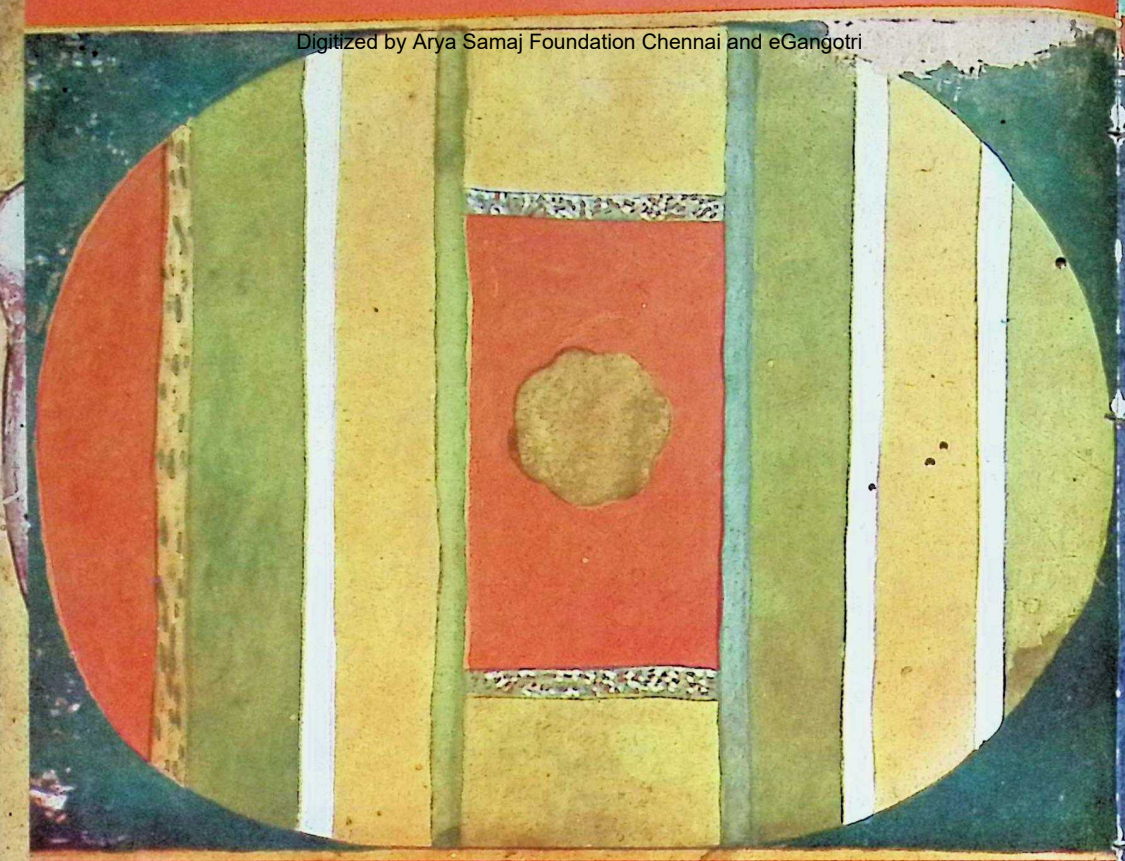

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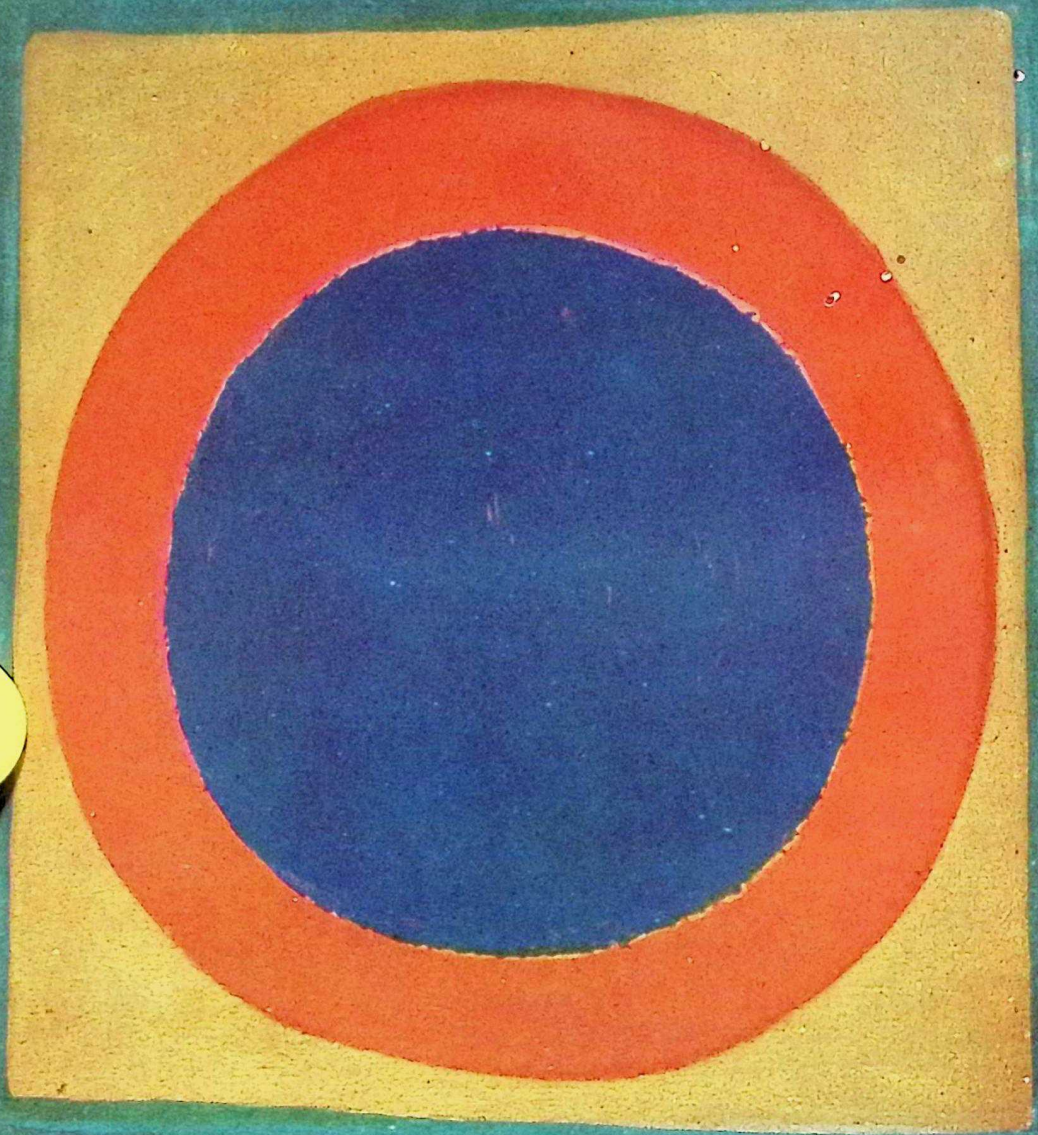

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PLATES

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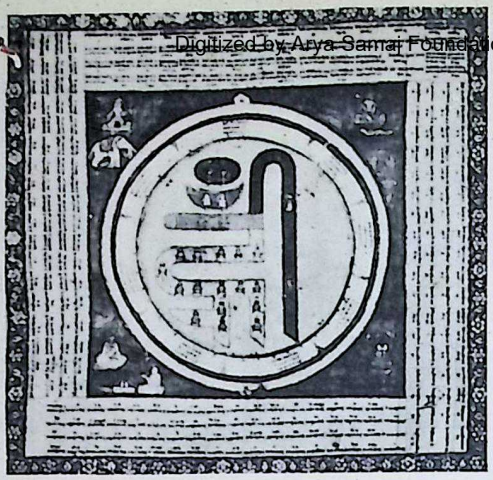

Plate : 1

OM Yantra, is the basic and the primal sound—the sound-symbol of the Supreme One. All creation proceeds from this original **pranava** sound, which, as the aggregate of all existing sounds, gives birth to the cosmic process itself.
Rajasthan, 18th century.
Gouache on cloth 90 × 60 cm.

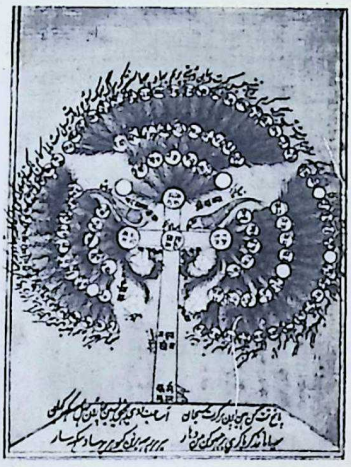

Plate : 2

Tree of Life, illuminated page from the manuscript 'Omkara Apara Brahma' by Shyamananda, written in Arabic script. It illustrates the oneness of Atman, the Self within, and Brahman, the Ultimate Reality. Like two inseparable birds with golden plumes, the individual and the immortal Self perch on the branches of a single tree. One tastes of the sweet and bitter fruits while the other tasting of neither, calmly observes. When one fuses the separate elements of one's being **(jibatman),** one realises unity with the Universal Being **(Paramatman)** 23 x 15 cm.

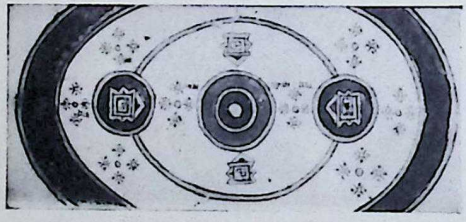

Plate : 3

The study of the universe as a whole includes both cosmogony, the theory of the origin of the universe, and cosmography, a description of the universe.
The Brahmanda comprises the whole cosmos and contains zones called **lokas** arranged in three principle strata known as **triloka,** three worlds. At the end of each cycle, the world is dissolved, in a cosmological event known as **laya** or dissolution, and when the universe re-enters the mind of Brahma all manifestation starts again.
An illuminated Ms. page, Gujarat.
c. 16th century A.D. 18 x 10 cm.

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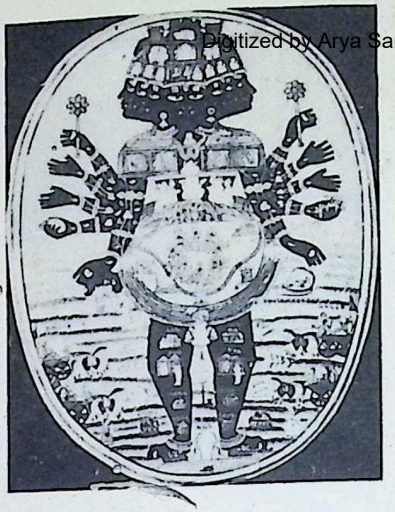
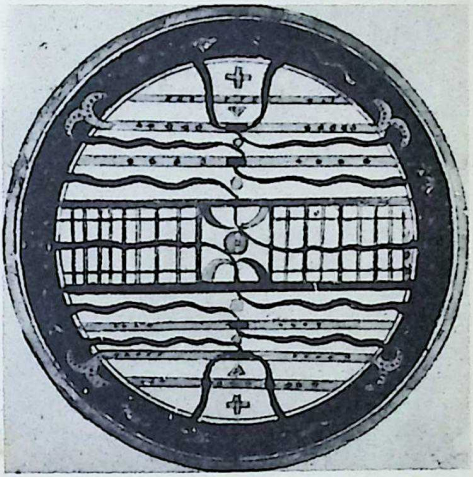


Plate : 4

Visvarupadarshana, Arjuṇa's vision, of the universal form of Krishna's manifestations. Arjuna is shown the **visvarupa**—the universal form of the formless, in which unity of all forms to the whole universe in its manifold forms manifest themselves in its element power.
Rajasthan, c·18th century A.D.
Gouache on paper 36 x 27 cm.

Plate : 5

Jambudvipa. The earth was called the island of Jambu, the innermost of the seven ring-like continents of Indian cosmology. It was divided into various regions. Jambu is surrounded by a sea of salt water called Lavana. Around Jambu are seven continents, the last island continent-ring, Pushkara, being encompassed by a circular sea of fresh water called Jala. Bordering this outermost sea is the fabulous land of **Lokaloka** ('world-no-world') which separates the visible world from the region of darkness. The position of Jambudvipa in relation to the universe forms an integral part of Indian cosmology.
Rajasthan, 18th century.
Ink and colour on paper 23 x 23 cm.



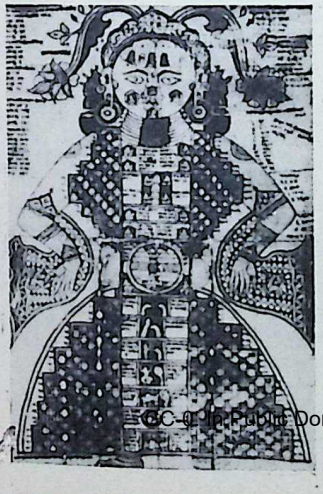


Plate : 6

Purushakara Yantra. The complete drama of the universe is contained in the human body. The body with all its biological and psychological processes becomes an instrument in and through which cosmic power reveals itself.
Rajasthan, 18th century.
Gouache on cloth 38 x 28 cm.

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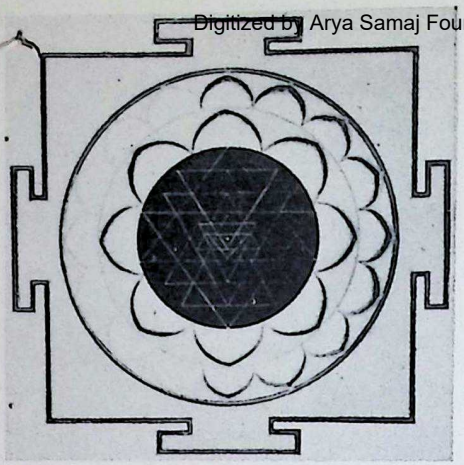

Plate : 7

Sri Yantra. The equilateral triangular shape standing on its base, the apex of each angle, a laya (absorption) point determined by the vortex, represents Purusha, the Immanent Principle. Standing on its apex, with its extensions dominating, it represents Prakriti, the power of manifestation.
Rajasthan, 18th century.
Gouache on paper 20 x 20 cm

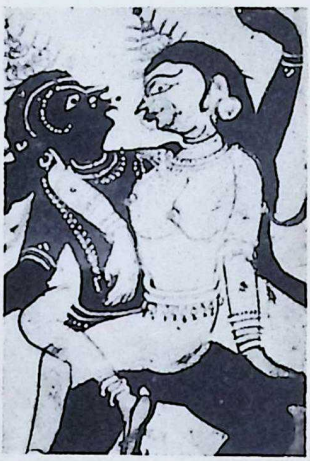

Plate : 8

Purusha and Prakriti. The complete intensity of embrace, the two all-pervading ones, Purusha and Prakriti become a single principle in Supreme Bliss, which is the highest non-duality—a state of liberation.
Orissa, c. 17th century.
Gouache on paper 15 x 23 cm.

Plate : 9

Diagram of the six **chakras** in the subtle body. Human experience owes to tantra the discovery and location of the centres of energy-**chakras** in the human body. Every individual is a manifestation of that energy, and the objects around us are the outcome of the same consciousness, ever revealing itself, in various modes.
Kangra school, Himachal Pradesh, 18th century.
Gouache on paper 48 x 28 cm.

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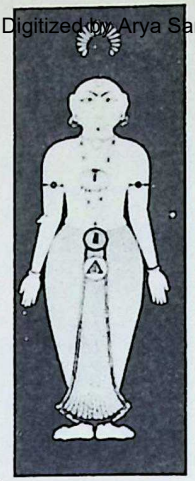

Plate : 10

Diagram of the **chakras** in the subtle body. The **chakras**—centres of psychic energy in the subtle body are mainly situated along the central spinal cord. Within the spine is enclosed **sushumna,** the central **nadi**—artery or channel of the subtle body—flanked by **ida** and **pingala,** the lunar and solar subtle nerves. The **sushumna nadi** extends upwards from the **muladhara-chakra** at the base of the spine, to the medulla oblongata at the top of the spinal column, which passing through the principal aperture called the **chakra,** generally translated 'plexus', is also called the **padma** or lotus, and represents a centre for the supply and distribution to the physical of the vital or **pranic** forces.
Rajasthan, 18th century.
Gouache on paper 120 x 46 cm.

Plate : 11

Worship of the Trident as emblem of its indwelling deity, Siva. Many facets of human activity and thought have been assimilated in the deification of Siva. He is the god of dissolution, the personification of disintegrative forces of the cosmos.
Rajasthan, 18th century.
Gouache on paper 25 x 17 cm.

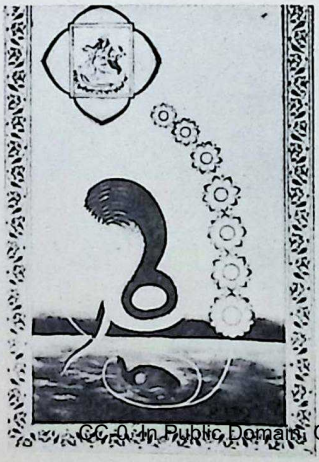

Plate : 12

Muladhara-chakra forming a continuous scroll. **Kundalini Sakti,** symbolically represented as serpent power, is the supreme force in the human body. When **kundalini** sleeps in the **muladhara-chakra,** man is only aware of his immediate earthly circumstances. When **Kundalini awakes** and arises like a fiery serpent and unites with the supreme consciousness, man no longer remains sensitive to his own limited perceptions but participates in the source of light itself.
Rajasthan, 18th century.
Gouache on paper 40 x 28 cm.

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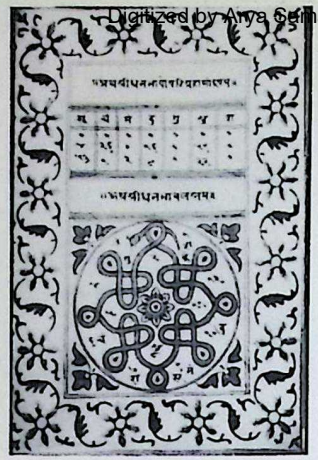

Plate : 13

Yantra, coiled up energy known as **kundalini** or serpent power is lying latent in the human body just as great energy is contained within the atom. The tantric aims to release this great energy and direct it through inner centres (**chakras**) of the body to attain self-realisation.
Rajasthan, 19th century A.D.
Gouache on paper 26 x 17 cm.

Plate : 14

Kundalini, the potent energy symbolized by a serpent, lies in deep sleep throughout one's lifetime, and even its existence remains unsuspected. The controlled awakening of the **kundalini** is one of the main objects of several branches of yoga and tantrism. By appropriate exercises the 'serpent of life, fire and wisdom' can be aroused and properly directed to energize the body and soul.
Rajasthan, c. 19th century.
Gouache on paper 20 x 14 cm.

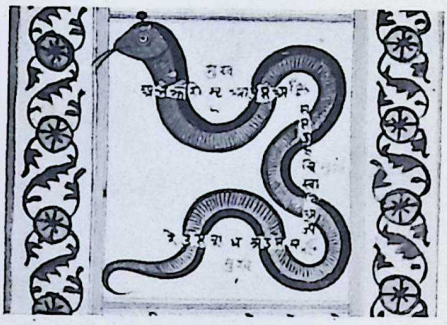

Plate : 15

Kalanalam Agni chakra. All mantras, primarily mental sound, have their corresponding colours and forms. When a **mantra** is prouounced correctly, its corresponding form begins to manifest itself, the quality of manifestation depending upon the nature and intensity of the pronounciation. When the **agni-mantra** is uttered, the colour red and the quality of heat are evoked. This is the subtle mantric effect of this **Agni** or **Kalanalam Chakra.**
Rajasthan, 18th century.
Gouacne on paper 30 x 21 cm.

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Plate : 16

Garuda, a mythical bird holding fast nine elephants symbolizing the lower constituents of the partial self.
Kangra school, c. 19th century.
Gouache on paper 25 x 30 cm.

Plate : 17

Surya Mandala
Rajasthan, c. 19th century.
Ink and colour on paper 44 x 44 cm.

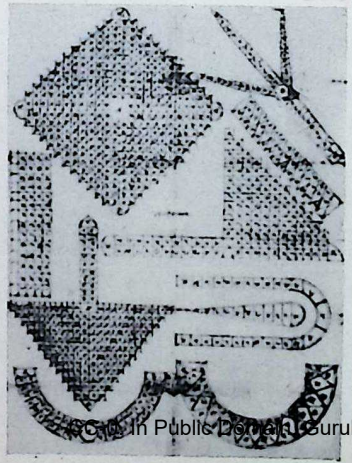

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Plate : 18

The letters of the Sanskrit alphabet, for meditation and worship and the sound root of all divine knowledge.
Rajasthan, 19th century.
Ink on paper 46 x 47 cm.

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Plate : 19

Hari-Hara. Vishnu (Hari), the preserver, merging with Siva (Hara), the destroyer, symbolizes the eternal cycle of birth and rebirth.
Jammu-Kashmir, 17th century.
Gouache on paper 19 x 19 cm.

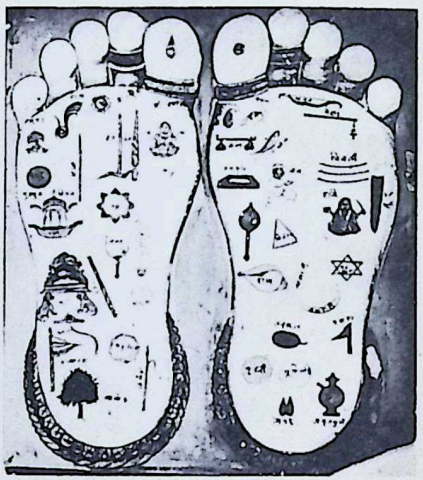

Plate :20

Vishnu appeared on earth in several forms, each time as a saviour of mankind or as a destroyer of some evil. These incarnations on the earthly scene are known as his **avatara**, 'descents' and his symbols are represented with objects like **gada** (mace), **padma** (lotus), **sankha** (conch), **chakra** (discus), etc.
Rajasthan, 18th century.
Gouache on paper 20 x 17 cm.

70198

Plate : 21

The science of the knowledge of interplanetary rhythms and their integral relations with the human organism is shown in different symbols and signs.
Rajasthan, 18th century.
Ink and colour on paper 23 x 18 cm.

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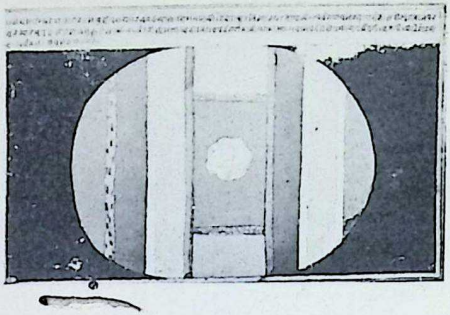

Plate : 22

Golaka. Earth—globe with stratum on nine energy fields. The nucleus is global, or oval in shape. All natural elements possessing solidity are global in their primordial states.
Rajasthan
Gouache on paper 27 x 42 cm.

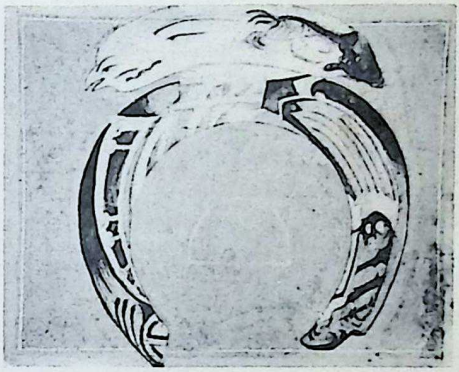

Plate : 23

Dharma, the principle of motion, and **adharma,** the principle of rest. All creation evolves, inanimate as well as animate. This development is not a process of radical change but rather as a gradual uncovering of a quintessence originally present and incapable of modification.
Rajasthan, c. 18th century.
Gouache on paper 20 x 17 cm.

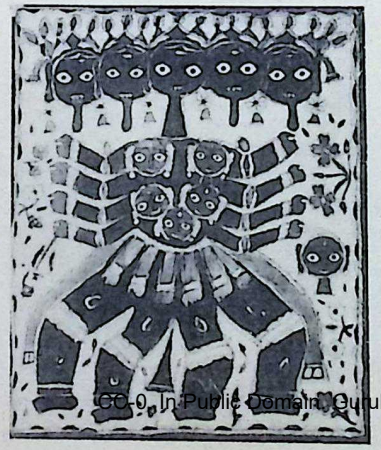

Plate : 24

The goddess Kali is manifesting herself by her maya, power of cosmic delusion, renewing the cycles of inception and annihilation through never-ending aeons of time. Her third eye looks beyond space and time. With the sword of physical extermination she cuts the thread of life, of bondage, and is relentless only to be benevolent. She is the changeless, unlimited, primordial power, acting in the great drama of creation and destruction.
Madhubani folk painting, Bihar
Gouache on paper 70 x 55 cm.

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Plate : 25

Navagunjar, universal monarch form. Pata painting, Puri, Orissa. Contemporary—made by the folk painter for pilgrims. Diameter 17 cm.

Tantric symbols and patterns, the store-house of which is yet little known, light up form and colour because what the **shilpi-yogin** arrives at is related to his inner spiritual growth—a truth which might open up a new understanding of the world forces in which we are living and which modern artists are trying to explain as shown in the plates 26, 27, 28.

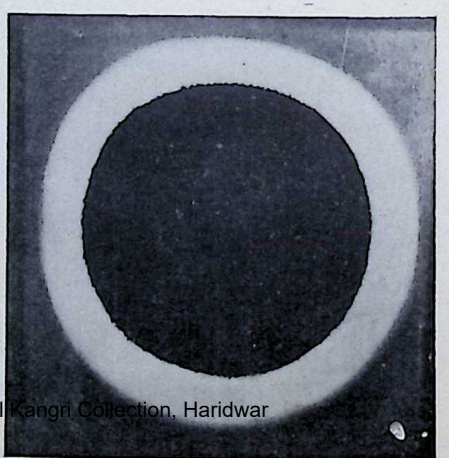

Plate : 26
Painting by Biren De
Oil on canvas, 1966, 60 x 70 cm.

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Plate : 27

Composition by Priya Mookerjee
Etching 1[illegible] x 30 cm.

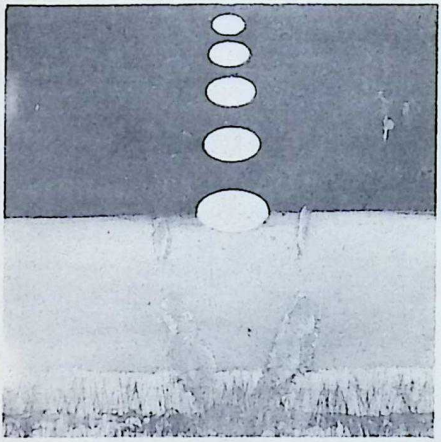

Plate : 28

Composition by Priya Mookerjee
Etching 1972, 25 x 20 cm.

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AFTERWORD

Pre-historic man and woman

Out of the dark days and darker nights of pre-history, we have glimpses of primitive man struggling to survive in the dense forests. He issues out of the cave shelter after drawing on the walls the pictures of his victory in the hunt of the bison, the rhinoceros and the stag. He moves in the bush almost like one of the beasts, except that he can use the spear, the bow and the flint axe. He is overshadowed by the vegetation of the jungle and can hardly ever see the sky. Thus he only has a one-dimensional view of the earth. He is aware of the dense atmosphere about him, of the vegetation, and the cave from which he goes out and to which he returns.

In the cave is the woman, who lights the home fire, roasts the flesh of the hunted animal, and tends the children.

After he has satisfied his hunger, he makes love.

As man evolved on the 'bestial floor', he became aware of himself, as the desiring one, and of the woman, as the desired one.

Another leap forward and he began to sense the ecstasy of the connection between himself and the woman, the urge, the vague, momentary but real onrush of passion, of which he was afraid and which he yet wanted to express.

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The fleeting moment had to be fixed in a visual image, so that he could invoke it at will. The return to the moment was imperative, because, through copulation with the woman, he had sown the seed, and the child was born from the very place where he had entered. Thus he made a terracotta image of the woman as the giver of progeny, the source of life, for worship, as something remote but sacred. And, in order to emphasise the role of mother, as the bringer forth, he enlarged the triangle, and made it a symbol.

This mythical symbol became a desire image of the fertile pudenda.

The worship of this symbol, through the centuries, made for concentration on the mystery of man, woman and the moment reached between them. The lover and the beloved, and the love, were not separate anymore. All the three were concentrated in the holy triangle.

The symbol

In the gyrations of time, of copulation, birth and death, the residuum of feelings made the moment of which the secret finding place was in the triangle, the sign of all fertile things, the earth goddess itself. The memory of the thrust into the pudenda brought another symbol, the trident, held by a wild, lusty looking male, whose image we find on one of the seals of Mohenjodaro.

The continuous uprush of the sap, rising in the male and female bodies, urged towards one another, often brought the consciousness, after every child, and the memory from within

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the depths of the silences in between the rhythmic periods, of something ineffable, of utter delight, of a miracle. And this was sacred. Into the circardian undertones of the body-soul, sex became the crucible, in which everything was resolved—the tensions of the workaday life and the casual improvisations longed for in the reveries when the blood became hot on seeing the shapely woman, secretly desiring fulfilment.

Inspite of the fact that the holy triangle and the erect trident had been established as images of worship, the mystery of the union of male and female remained in the continuous pull of the sexes, expressed through sidelong glances, shared smiles, and the chance touchings.

The holy triangle and the erect trident

As the leisure hours were in the night, and the days were occupied by the crude lumps of toil, the shining light of the four eyes, when each was both, was clouded, except in sub feelings, in the vital turbulences, ragings and seekings.

The image of the mother-goddess was permanent.

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Nature gods of the Aryan

The barbarian Aryan nomads, infiltrating into the lush landscape of the mountains, valleys and plains of the five rivers, found the local Dravidian populations to be creatures of intense passion, who had fixed the images of desire in a naked goddess. Childlike and naive, they also personified their nature shocks into

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Prithvi the earth, Varuna the sky, Surya the sun, Indra the thunder, and Usha the dawn. This acceptance of the cosmos may have owed itself to the joy in the physical life of the local people.

Hymn of creation

In the first flush of curiosity, the adventurous mind of the Rig Vedic poet conceived the world in the hymn of creation to be 'desire in the seed of spirit'.

The patriarchal Brahmin priests, who recited chants during the ritual of worship on altars, where Yajna sacrifices were made to gain plenty from the gods, spiritualised all offerings. They were already deriding the native folk for their many images, through their own existence on the free offering of pure prayers to the gods. They had perhaps recoiled back at the attraction of the youth to the lure of the dark pagan women. The fact that the organs of sex were also the organs of excretion of bodily wastes, made the priests react away from too frequent mention of male and female.

The one and the many

In this period, however, the myth was created that Brahma, the One Supreme Spirit, desired to become Many; so he entered his consort Lakshmi, and creation came into being; but as the many cannot survive in their duality, they desire to 'become One with the Almighty, and continually strive for union with the One'.

We can speculate on how much this story owed itself to the animistic cosmic propensities of the Dasyus.

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Dharma, artha, kama

But as the Kshatriya and the Vaishna castes lived the worldly life to the full, under the sanctions of *Dharma, Artha* and *Kama*, as spirit and body, the priests tended to make the worship into cosmorphic prayers and raised the Gods into purer and purer and more exalted consciousness, through words. They did not encourage images to imprison the imagination. There is no trace of any Vedic artefacts, except the cubist sacrificial altars, the Swastika drawing, and the symbol Aum.

Symbol of aum

* * *

The anthropormorphic Dravidians, however, have left several terracotta forms, of which the dominant one is the naked woman, with the eternal triangle of the mother goddess.

Instinctive life of dravidians

The prohibitions from the top did not inhibit the exuberances of the folk. They freed themselves from the tyranny of the resonant, pontifical words, into images of lovely female tree spirits, snake gods and goddesses in coition, fauns, fairies, demons, demonesses. And they remained secure in these icons, until the instinctive love of new phenomena demanded identification, fixation and fresh worship. The impulsive life seems to bring new visions, in which the poet of intense emotions fuses the love of beauty, the urge of desire, and the search. The primitivist pantheon continually affirmed the love of life, in all its nakedness, on this earth. The creations of myriads of forms in clay and stone, redolent of the passion to flourish, and to be

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happy in eating, drinking, dancing, singing, and in the ferment of activity, show refulgent desire, the culmination of which is reached in love making.

* * *

Gautama Buddha against desire

Gautama Buddha, who was also in revolt against the secret esotericism of the Brahmins, felt compassionate to the rejected ones, but thought, at the end of his search, that life was pain, because it was bound up with desire. And he preached the path of right doing and right utterance in a mysticism of the open mind, which may attain the first and last freedom of dissociation of mind and heart, in a timeless Nirvana.

Pagan people continue the life of the sense

The many people who flocked to him and his monks for sympathy, did not, however, give up the pulsations of the blood. The living warmth of the physical connection reappeared on the memorial stupas of the enlightened one, in the abandon of inspired forms, in the free flow of life. Lovely, big-hipped, moon-breasted, cylindrical girls move before the men, in innumerable visions of dance, in praise of the enlightened one, on the earth which is their Nirvana.

The monks sought to put ambivalent meaning into these reliefs, that such happiness was to be shunned. But the people came to the beat of drums, and went home to the villages imbued with drunken bliss. They clung, in their intuitions, to life as *lila* of the Hindu myth. And, ultimately, the sensuousness of the pagan

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folk was to permeate the Buddhist sangha, to achieve the sense of glory in the yab—yam embrace of man and woman as spirit and body.

* * *

Among the Hindus in the *Chandogya Upanishads*, the prayer of god himself was : 'May I be Many !' This became the mirror for all the selves, and the main sanction for sex union.

The participation of the people in the festivals of happiness, with naive abandon, the beating of the drums day and night for worship, and the sensuous imagery of the shrines, seems to have inspired the thinkers, generation after generation, to join the frenzies. The supermen, who had been commenting on the holy books for *yoga* (union with the Supreme) began to compile *sutras* on the hundred thousand rites of the people in love making, and began to organise mystical brotherhoods, for ceremonies, of what came to be called *bhoga*, the reaching out to ecstasy, through eating, drinking and interc urse with women.

Yoga and bhoga

These secret cults for discovering the inner soul flourished, inspite of, or perhaps because of, the contempt for passion of the patriarchs. The new young of every generation were drawn towards the visions of warm embraces, because, in their subdued eyes, they were aware of the taboos against happiness.

These urges for freedom from the prison of the

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Vedic esoteric doctrine involved many tensions. The ritualists of *bhoga* were compelled to invent, at first, instinctive, and, then, intricately constructed images and prayers to convert the reveries of the faith into salvation. Even though the ceremonies of these cults were pleasurable, the relationship of the self to the other self was not a spontaneous union. The touching and tasting, hearing and seeing was not directly of a woman, but through prescribed forms of ritual in the worship of images.

Tantra

These forms of worship were vaguely called Tantra. And for centuries they continued to be the hidden magical practices of secret societies.

* * *

Influence of Kama Sutra

About the sixth century A.D., when the *Kama Sutra* of Vatsyayana, and the expressive sensuous poetry of the classical renaissance, had brought sex into the open, the Tantra cults began to be heard of as highly rewarding rituals and not merely barbaric and obscene practices of debauchery.

Of course, the ritual remained secret, because the Tantrics held that only a Guru of long practice and experience could initiate the worshipper into the psychology of worship for self-realisation through *bhoga*. The prayers and the ritual objects were only the outer signs of an experience more vital than that of the accepted *yoga*.

Thus, the initiate had to give up the ordinary

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life and spend himself like any Brahmacharya, for many years to make himself the vehicle for the mystique of sex union.

Yantras, mantras and worship images

The *yantras*, or diagrams, and the images, through which the Vasanas, or energies, could be aroused, (such as the figures marking out the stages through which the kundalini, at the base of the spine, could throw up light) to make the thousand lotuses in the head blossom, were worked out imaginatively. The *mantras*, or prayers, based mainly on the ancient *Aum*, in which was supposed to be the lava of the life-volcano and *Mani*, meaning jewel or the semen in the male organ, and *padma*, meaning the lotus indicative of the female organ, were thought out through intense concentration.

* * *

As the ancient *yoga* meditation had been accepted by the Buddha, for the pursuit of awareness, so now the *bhoga* of the Hindu Tantras came to be recognised. And, during the next centuries, certain sections of the Buddhist monks, particularly in Tibet, evolved a highly intricate ritual of breathing exercises, passionate embraces and creative processes of the male Vajrapani in the yab-yam coition, with his heart's wisdom. Many artefacts, in the form of *Yantras*, drawings, *Tankhas*, and sculptures, were created, some of great quality, for use in the ceremonials for dissolution beyond space and time.

Penetration of tantra symbols into Buddhism

* * *

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As the Tantra ebulitions were secret expolsions from the hearts of people, who wished to reach new resonances, words like 'serpent power', *anandalahiri*, or waves of bliss, *Shakti Shakta* came to be known as symbolic keys to the enjoyment of delight. The states of mind of the prayer makers of the Tantra, were like those imagined by the Irish poet Yeats, who said : 'the soul moves among symbols, when trance, or madness, or deep meditation, has withdrawn it from every impulse but its own.'

* * *

Ritual images

The same creative process produced the ritual images. They were made by craftsmen, who defined the drifting feelings, who had seen the plastic images of antiquity, and who allowed themselves to mould new symbols of ideals seized by the Guru. The icons are, however, either hieratic or ritual objects made on the models of the older images, or new drawings, plaques, reliefs or sculptures, which are instinctive works designed for immediate use. Colours often represent the sound vibrations and have close associations with the Hindu *Silpashastra* injunctions about the symbolic meaning of the various hues of the rainbow.

The obscurities of these vibrations realised in fresh imagery, certainly brought to view a new world of subconscious feelings, such as had seldom been seen in the orthodox artefacts of Hindu iconography.

The purpose of all the imagery is magic.

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This had obviously arisen from the uncanny beliefs of the early agrarian communities seeking plenty from the gods by way of good harvests.

In the *Atharvaveda*, there is a magical mantra to be recited, while sowing the seeds :

'Raise thyself up, from thick by thy
own might, oh ! grain !
Burst every vessel ! The lightening in
heaven shall not destory thee !'

The magical invocation to the grain god had a correspondence in the dances of the ancient Greeks, in the Chinese Shamanite dances of woman and man, as well as the dances in the temples of ancient Egypt, where the ritual was presided over by the high priests and the queen herself.

The Tantric initiate was groomed into magic by the guru step by step.

The ultimate ritual is organised to realise the female power in oneself.

The tantric initiate

One of the rituals of the *Tantra Sadhana* is based on the *Sat Chakra Bheda*. This is an almost anatomical ritual.

Sat chakra bheda

There are said to be two nerve coils or nadis, running parallel, on the two sides of the spinal cord, called the *Susumna*, which itself stretches from near the pelvic curve to the brain. It is part of the spinal cord complex.

In the *Susumna* is another nerve cord called the *Vajrkhya*.

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In this, again, there is another nerve cord called the *Citrini*. This is the core of the *Susumna*. There are seven *padmas*, or lotuses, situated at seven different points of the *Susumna* cord. The lotuses are the seven centres of the female in man.

By control of breath, the Tantra *Sadhaka* is enjoyed to arouse the *Kula Kundalini Shakti*, or the coiled femininity, in the nethermost centre of the *Susumna* near the pelvis.

After this has been aroused, the idea is to communicate through the *citrini* cord, towards the brain energy, from the source, by piercing the successive seven lotuses, the *Sahasra Dula-Padma*, the lotuses of the thousand petals, which is the seat of the highest consciousness.

The kundalini yoga

This realisation of the ultimate female principle of the *Kula Kundalini Yoga* may have derived from archaic magic practices, embodied in the *craya* songs, in which the dance was conceived as a vehicle of the flame that burns everything, leaving pure femininity behind.

* * *

Another way to realise the feminine principle in the male worshipper, is through the indulgence of five forms of sex. This ritual is also based on the reference to old fertility cults, which had conceived a parallelism between the female deity and the plants.

The practices associated with the God Shiva as phallic power, and Shakti the female principle,

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were merged, through the Kapalika monks, from the sixth century downwards, with the Tantric cults.

There were other hunches about evolution of the human personality, through the penetration into matter in the universe, through rituals based on the idea of ultimate union between *Purusha* and *Prakriti*. The emphasis of these rituals was also on the female genital organ. Thus the magical worship of these cults fused itself into the Tantra magic.

The five Ma-s

The five Ma-s, pleasing to the Gods in the Tantra worship, are *Madya* (wine), *Memsa* (meat), *Matsya* (fish), *Mudra* (fried corn) and *Mithuna* (sex intercourse).

The ritual, which enjoined these five Ma-s, could not escape the censure of the searchers after the highest consciousness, through the pure *Yoga*. But the Tantrics assert that there cannot be any *Siddhi*, ritual success, whatever, without wine. Therefore, 'you must drink it carefully, and make her drink too and only then you should utter the spells.'

The word *Tantra*, derived from the root *Tan* or *Stran*, means to extend or to spread. In the first instance, it probably meant extending the human family. Later, through the various accretions, vague hunches, poetical metaphors and definite psychological insights, it became the concept of liberation, through physical union, by the mingling of male and female, in utter bliss.

* * *

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'Who am I ? Whence have I come ? Where am I going ?' asks the Tantric Shaktas.

'I am all this. Out of me all things originate and into me all are withdrawn,' answers Shakti.

Is tantra art relevant for us ?

The ritual evolved for the fusion, through the lingam-yoni union, emphasises the primitivist hunch that the evolution of the cosmos itself is based on the sex function.

Shakti, being the controlling intelligence behind the universe, and man and woman its highest creations, the human intercourse in the *Tantra* is conceived as holy, and the very opposite of sin, as in the Adam and Eve myth of the Christians, where the original couple was turned out of paradise for eating the forbidden fruit of knowledge.

Thus the *Tantra* seeks to establish heaven on earth.

There is no doubt that the mystique of the Tantra cults has a firm psychological basis in the many recent theories of the psychology of the subconscious. And various myths of this doctrine open up vibrations of the evolving human personality, against the subtle esotericism of the word of the Brahmins. And it is likely that the transfigurations will be revealed by advanced research, in the flowing streams of consciousness, with a possible breakthrough to the idea of awakening and activising the self through imaginative creations. If, however, the Tantra magical practices are only revealed

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Tantra magical practices revealed only to initiates

to an initiate, who may acquire the secret resonances, and use ritual objects to achieve the ecstasy of *bhoga,* then artefacts really only have meaning for the worshipper.

Artefacts vital

Certainly, several of these artefacts of ritual have aesthetic appeal. The primitivist drawings have the same urgency as the little statuette of an African Venus, which Picasso valued for its sheer expression of energies. The passional approach of the maker often infused vitality into images of coalescing, which may expand the consciousness of the sympathetic seer. The mask of the image includes the possible strivings of the individual, between self and the other self, and has deep magico-mystical potencies.

But it is unlikely that this kind of cult image can carry over, to the secular onlooker, the transcending powers for expansion of his own awareness, without total knowledge of its meaning, significance and possible use in his own life.

Contemporary tantra art is revivalist

That is why much recent 'Tantra art' by contemporary artists, has remained revivalist. The new images are 'pretty pictures' or anticipatory designs, or echoes of the hieratic paintings, without exalting either the artist, or the onlooker to the exalted heights.

We must beware of the misinterpretation of the Yab-yam image, for instance, as pornography.

The ceremonial of the mythological folk beliefs and magical cults has little relevance for the world of technology. Except that it may stimulate the breaking away from the static

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machine civilisation to a 'return to the native country', to the spark of those creative energies which have been nearly extinguished by the going away from nature's dark immensities to mechanical artificiality.

The desire to experience art possesses many of the young. They wish to venture out and participate in the aboundings, reveries and dreams of the subtle brooding, songs, chants and prayers of a new poetry. They seek new consciousness of the earth and of man and woman and love.

But it is true, as Arnold Toynbee asserted, that civilisations die 'through the isolation of the ephemeral souls'. Also, it is possible that creative forces are atrophied by being imprisoned in old forms.

The inspiration of tantra for the new consciousness

Certainly, the old human emotions occur in the new life. The eternal search of man in woman, and of woman in man, for an 'equation', as also for the transcendence 'where each is both', is eternal. The tussle between the sensibilities, the ragings, the furious nervous stirrings for each other, against the pressures of civilisations, are, however, thwarted by the guilt and shame of insidious references to sin. The sheer physical exhaustion brought by the machine corrodes the soul.

Man has to recognise the crucible of the female principle. And he can find fulfilment if he acquires the awareness of his own potential desire, and of the substratum of woman's uprush and offers to the 'love play', the warmth of his whole person, to evoke her passion and his own.

The resurrection of sacred love is possible.

Mulk Raj Anand

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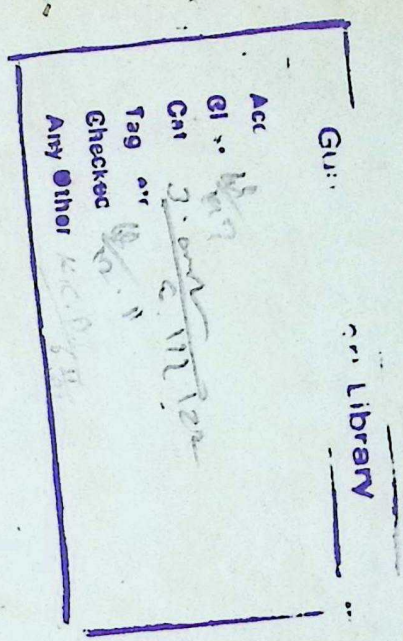

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